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FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0117
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
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CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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CJTTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
COMUSNAVCENT
DIA WASHDC
HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000028

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA, DS/IP/SPC/SO, INR,
AF/E LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/20/2029

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: ERITREAN MILITARY SITUATION NEAR BADME

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for Reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Living conditions and morale are poor for the military stationed near Badme, according to a source whose son is on leave from his assignment with the 21st Tanks unit (NFI) in that area. The son stated the soldiers are fed three meager meals per day, two consisting only of a piece of bread and the third a small bowl of sorghum porridge and another piece of bread. Morale is extremely low in his unit and the officers have ordered the soldiers not to listen to Eritrean or foreign radio broadcasts because they do not want the them to hear the Eritrean government refused to grant a pay raise to the military. The son estimated at least 10 soldiers per month are deserting from his unit and fleeing to Ethiopia.

¶2. (C) The son stated there have been no recent skirmishes between Eritrean and Ethiopian forces, but the Eritrean military is concerned over the growing number of attacks in this region by the Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrean Kunama (DMLEK). He also stated the tanks and weapons in his unit are operational and they continue to train.

MCMULLEN